

Friends of the GTM NERR

Minutes of Board Meeting: Tuesday, February 12, 2008

Members Present:

Peter Difatta, Nancy Schachnovsky, Irene Kaufman, Barb Starck, Michael Timpane, Chris Rich, Jonathan Katzen

Staff Present:

Teri Webley, Mike Shirley, Janet Zimmerman, Angel Gonzales

Excused Absence:

Pierre Pierce, Anita Pierce, Craig O'Neal, Carl Hampp, Bill Coleman, Frank Pixler

Meeting called to order at 5 pm by Peter Difatta at the EEC

January Meeting Minutes Approval by Peter Difatta

Motion to approve the January meeting minutes was made by Michael T.

Seconded by Irene.

All in favor none opposed the January meeting minutes were approved.

Financial Report by Nancy Schachnovsky

Nancy announced that the tax return for the previous fiscal year ending October 1, 2007 has been filed. There are no significant issues with the tax return that require discussion at this meeting.

A loss of \$12,000 was reported last year. Nancy offered copies of the financial report and profit and loss reports for year end to anyone who wants them.

Nancy explained that the reason for the \$12,000 loss was a \$17,000 loss on the sale of the fish tank. The fish tank was accepted as a donation and then sold for significantly less than its estimated value.

Nancy recommended that the Board not approve any major expenditure at this time. Nancy suggested a limit of up to \$1,000 for the next month on approved expenditures.

Nancy further explained that this limit should stay in effect until each committee chairman has submitted a budget to the Finance Committee and received approval for that budget. Nancy also explained that memberships are down at this time and if spending isn't restricted it may start eating into the endowment funds.

Michael T asked if the fish tank that the loss was taken on had value.

Nancy said that she is confident that the \$36,000 value reported to the IRS by the donor was legitimate.

Janet explained that the tank was a 200 gallon salt water aquarium that was coral reef related. It was thought that the tank could be used in the exhibit hall. But after

Financial cont.

caring for the tank for a period of time it was learned that the tank was too costly to maintain. The tank was put up for sale. There were several interested parties that looked at the tank. But no one purchased the tank. So Marineland purchased it for \$3000.

Michael T asked what the endowment was.

Nancy explained that the endowment was all the accounts combined and amounted to a little over \$100,000.

Nancy added that the Nature Store account is separate from the others.

Michael T asked if the Finance Committee has met this year.

Nancy answered that the Finance Committee has no reason to meet until the budget proposals from the other committees are given to them.

Peter explained to Nancy that he was involved in the Finance Committee last year. The method use for creating budgets then was to take the budget from the previous year and increase it slightly. This was done without input from the committees.

Nancy responded that she had already spoken to Bill and Carl on the subject and is aware that that is how it was done. Nancy said her impression was that it was done that way because there was on other choice. This year there is a choice.

Michael T asked what the year end balance was in 2006, cash assets etc.

Nancy said that the year end balance in 2006 reflected that the Friends of the GTM Reserve took in about as much as they spent that year.

Peter suggested that Nancy should email all Committee Chairs with a list of what the Financial Committee needs from them concerning budgets.

Mike S explained that the Research Reserve staff is prioritizing projects so they can identify what they will need help from the Friends of the GTM Reserve with. The projections will be for the next 5 years and should help with budgeting. This information should be available in the next week or so.

Michael T said that a cash balance report would help his committee develop a budget.

Nancy said that as of the next Board meeting a cash report will be available. Nancy added that the non cash assets (Nature Store) are not sellable.

Nancy explained that nothing was done to update the books since March when the last Treasurer left. Teri continued to make deposits and pay bills but was never trained on the books. It has taken this long to bring the books current.

Financial Con.

Peter returning to what Mike S explained earlier asked Nancy if it would be possible to wait 2 weeks before expecting budget requests from the committee chairs.

This would give the committee chairs time to get the budget request projections from the Research Reserve staff before submitting budgets to the Finance Committee.

When asked, Mike S said that 2 weeks to get the projected budget requests to the committee chairs was doable for the Research Reserve staff.

Nancy read from the minutes from a Finance Committee meeting that the books would be kept in an accrual basis and reported on a cash basis. Nancy requested that the books be reported on an accrual basis moving forward.

Peter called for comment from the board concerning cash vs accrual reporting. No one objected to Nancy's request.

Peter asked Nancy again if it was alright to wait a couple of weeks before the committee chairs submit budgets to the Finance Committee.

Nancy agreed to the 2 week wait cautioning the Board to be very careful of approving large expenditures until the budgets are approved.

Education and Communications Committee update by Michael Timpane

Michael asked the Board for a vote on a funds request for lunch at the Matanzas Inlet Workshop that was to take place the next day February 13 at the Marineland office. The workshop has about 85 people signed up to attend. A single source caterer was used this time. This will not be the case in the future. The request was made to the Education and Communications Committee last night February 11. This event has strong staff support and has been planned for some time. Even though the process for the funds request is wrong the Education and Communications Committee feels this is an important event and recommends Board approval for the request of \$610 for lunch for the event.

Peter called for questions or comments concerning the request for \$610 to pay for lunch provided to the people attending the Matanzas Inlet Workshop on February 13, 2008.

Jonathan motioned for approval of the funds request of \$610.

Chris seconded,

All approved, none opposed.

The next item Michael T brought before the board was the Second Annual Maritime Archeological Symposium.

Michael T explained that the Friends of the GTM Reserve participated last year and resulted in some disagreement between the Lighthouse (host of the event) and The Friends of the GTM Reserve.

Education cont.

The Education and Communications Committee recommends that the request be passed to the Finance Committee for review and that no vote concerning the request take place at this time.

Michael T explained that the Education and Communications Committee did not feel comfortable deciding a funds request this large (\$3200) and that the GTM Research Reserve staff did not give a very strong recommendation for funding the event. The process was flawed because not enough time was given to investigate the request thoroughly and establish how the funds were to be used.

Michael T said that the Education and Communications Committee gives the Finance Committee authority to make a decision on behalf of them.

Michael T added that since the request was put before the Education and Communications Committee he has learned that certain Board members that attended the reception last year did not feel the Friends of the GTM Reserve got the recognition they were led to believe they would for the event.

Irene said that the contribution would go entirely to the reception. The benefit to the Friends of the GTM Reserve would be enhancing the relationship with the Lighthouse and recognition at the event.

Nancy had questions about how the funds were to be used. According to the information provide to her \$15000 beyond the Friends potential \$3200 donation was donated and budgeted for the event.

Jonathan explained his understanding of the funds. Under matching funds St Augustine Lighthouse donates \$9000 toward the reception, St Augustine Archeological Association donates \$200 toward the reception, the Public Archeology Network donates \$1000 for a speaker for a keynote address at Flagler College, The GTM Research Reserve donates \$5000 for receptions out of their budget, and then there is the amount requested from the Friends of the GTM Reserve.

Michael T pointed out that the document provided for the funds request was not itemized and unclear as to the way the funds would be used.

Mike S agreed that having an itemized budget included in the funds request would help in making a decision as to whether to donate and how much.

Mike S added that partnership with the Lighthouse is important. Mike S went on to explain how the GTM Research Reserve has and continues to benefit from the relationship with the Lighthouse.

Mike suggested while remembering the importance of the relationship the Friends of the GTM Reserve should adjust their participation to something they are comfortable with.

Mike S added that he agreed with Michael T that the process used for the funds request is flawed and needs to be changed to give the Friends of the GTM Reserve more time to investigate and come to a decision.

Nancy requested a respond by date for the funds request.

Education cont.

Janet said that March 7 is the respond by date the Lighthouse has given. This date reflects the date the event information goes to the printer.

Chris asked for clarification concerning the dollar amount donated and having the Friends of the GTM Reserve mentioned in print.

Chris' understanding was that by virtue of hosting part of the event the Friends of the GTM Reserve and the GTM Research Reserve would be mentioned but if a significant donation were made by the Friends of the GTM Reserve their name would be include in the printed material. What is the required donation for print?

Mike S said that information was not made available to him yet.

Mike pointed out that the GTM Research Reserve has already put \$5000 into this event and he also would like a breakdown of the numbers.

Peter questioned Education and Communications Committees decision to send the funds request to Finance Committee. He referred to it as shucking their responsibility.

Michael T responded that they did understand that.

The explanation given by Education and Communications Committee members was that they agreed that it would be irresponsible to move forward with a funds request this large without input from the Finance Committee in light of the current budget situation and finance report.

Michael T said that if no other committee wants to take the issue on then the recommendation of the Education and Communications Committee is to decline the funds request of \$3200 for the Maritime Archeological Symposium.

Peter suggested that the response to the funds request be that the Friends of the GTM Reserve is not able to donate the amount requested this year but will offer a nominal amount.

There was discussion about donating \$500 which is the amount donated last year.

Mike S suggested that at the \$500 level the Friends of the GTM Reserve should have a table at the event. Especially considering that the \$500 is in addition to the \$5000 given by the GTM Research Reserve. Mike S added that he is also uncomfortable with the amount of \$3200 requested. There are still a lot of funds requests to be seen this year and this would be a large chunk of the Friends of the GTM Reserve resources.

Peter and Mike S agreed that \$500 was a better amount to consider for the event.

Jonathan pointed out the \$200 of that amount would be used for food at the Symposium held at the EEC.

Michael T stated that since procedure was not followed he would not vote yes on any amount for the event. He added that they were told last year that 2 months

Education cont.

was needed to consider future requests of this type and that the request must be itemized. They chose to ignore that. According to his information this is the 4th time in a row that procedure has been ignored.

Mike S said that he would call the director of the Lighthouse about the issues the Friends of the GTM Reserve Board is having with the funds request and how it was made.

After discussion about the merits of donating to the event Janet said she would submit a list of conditions for the \$500 donation to the event. If they agree to the conditions they get the donation. The Friends of the GTM Reserve Board will provide Janet with a list of conditions.

Peter called for a motion concerning a conditional donation of \$500 to the Maritime Archeological Symposium per Janet's suggestion.

Irene motioned to approve the \$500
Nancy seconded
6 in favor 1 opposed motion passed

Chris covered the third item the Education and Communications Committee presented to the Board. The Pop up displays.

Chris said there are 3 options for the displays. Chris showed pictures of the styles that are being considered. Bids for the first option something that would travel well were \$1400 and \$800 a third bid is being sought. The second option would be a permanent display for the EEC just outside the Nature Store the options for this are another of the style shown for the first option at a slightly reduced cost because the graphics are already there. This option might not wear for long. The next idea is an absolute permanent display like the existing displays in the EEC costing \$2100 this is the only bid available at this time. At this point Chris asked about a budget for the project.

Peter asked if Mike S and Janet were consulted in the process.

Chris said that they are a part of the process.

Chris asked if a budget for the Pop up display project would be voted on at this meeting.

Nancy suggested that the subject be carried over to the March 11 Board meeting.

Michael T said that the Education and Communications Committee would get 3 bids. Michael t added that the displays would benefit the Friends of the GTM Reserve by building recognition and interest. The materials used at event tables now are not effective.

Janet asked if the Finance Committee could produce a quarterly budget.

Education cont.

Michael T asked if the direction from the Board is to table the issue for a month.

Peter and Nancy encouraged the Education and Communications Committee to continue getting bids.

Jonathan suggested that the Education and Communications Committee be prepared to make a proposal concerning the Pop up displays at the next meeting.

Peter suggested to the Board members that they should consider continuity of procedure in what they do concerning the Friends of the GTM Reserve Board of Directors. This would help avoid a repeat of the events leading to the budget issues today. Use documentation and communication to ensure continuity from one Board to another.

Nancy informed the board that Janet provided a useable document retention policy to her and the rest of the needed policies will be available soon.

Michael T offered his copy of the Nonprofit Handbook for Citizen Support Organizations to Nancy.

Teri said that there is a box of the handbook in the Friends office.

Peter said that everyone on the Board should have a copy of the handbook.

Teri will bring copies of the handbook to the next meeting for the Board members that don't have one.

Michael T introduced the 4th item from the Education and Communications Committee to the Board.

The Education and communications Committee requires that all requests be presented to them a minimum of 2 months before the funds are needed and that all funds requests are itemized. Only requests following these guidelines will be accepted by the Education and Communications Committee. Also that dates for committee meetings will not be changed to accommodate funds requests.

Michael T suggested that the Board consider using and enforcing these guidelines as well.

Peter pointed out the Janet had already informed the GTM Research Reserve staff of these guidelines.

Janet added that a form had also been distributed to the staff last spring to support the guidelines.

Janet said that she would update the staff concerning the importance of following the prescribed guidelines.

Jonathan raised the question of unforeseen emergencies and proposed a resolution to say the guidelines will be enforced except in emergencies.

Education cont.

Mike S voiced his agreement of the guidelines.

Michael T asked for a vote on the resolution for committees not to consider any requests made less than 2 months prior to need and that all requests are itemized.

Peter suggested that the Board wait until Janet has supplied them with a copy of the form the staff sees so they can ensure the wording is accurate.

After Board discussion the issue was not tabled.

Michael motioned to pass the resolution stating that committees will consider funds requests made a minimum of 2 months before the date needed and all requests must be itemized except in the instance the need is deemed an emergency by Mike S or the Board of Directors of the Friends of the GTM Reserve.

Jonathan seconded

All approved none opposed passed

Janet and Mike will change forms and adjust procedure to accommodate the resolution. The change will be announced at managers meetings.

Mike S added that since all requests cross his desk first he will not sign any request that does not follow the guidelines in the new resolution.

Research Reserve Update by Janet Zimmerman

Janet introduced the new Volunteer Coordinator at the GTM Research Reserve Angel Gonzales. Mr. Gonzales started at the Research Reserve January 15, 2008 and is currently working on the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. The projected date for the dinner is May 17. The Friends of the GTM Reserve have traditionally been a sponsor of the dinner and Mr. Gonzales will submit his funds request per the prescribed procedure.

Janet announced that the Birding and Photo Fest will be held at the Research Reserve this year. BCB of St Augustine will finance the food booth but ask that the Research Reserve supply the man power to run the booth. The Friends can man the booth and collect the profits as a donation.

Michael T asked what the expected attendance for the event would be.

Angel said the estimated attendance is 200 to 250 people a day for 4 days.

Jonathan asked what the dates of the fest were.

Janet said the fest runs from April 10 through April 13.
The booth will need to be manned for all four days.

Research cont.

Janet explained that the hours of the event could be found in the brochure they will be about 10am to 2:30pm. The hours vary due to classes, tours, and seminars.

Mike S said that this is the first year the event will be held here.

Janet explained that the event was held at the St Augustine Amphitheatre for the last two years.

To clarify the booth request Janet is asking for Friends of the GTM Reserve members and volunteers to share the duties.

Peter asked the Board if there were any objections to participating in the event and manning the food booth.

There were no objections.

Management Plan Presentation by Mike Shirley

Mike S explained that this is the presentation that he is giving to groups throughout the area.

Mike S discussed the need for Friends of the GTM Reserve support for the growth of the Research Reserve.

That Friends groups around the country are getting more involved and even attending National meetings.

Mike S explained the Friends groups can go to government entities while state employees such as him and Janet can not.

The Reserves are not regulatory and can not comment on permits in a regulatory manner. They can express concern and impact the community through education.

Mike S explained that the Research Reserve is part of a 26 part system and this gives them power in Congress. The down side to the popularity is that Congress keeps designating more sites. This has an impact on how available Government funds are distributed. The pieces of the pie get smaller with the addition of each site.

Mike S pointed out that the Friends of the GTM Reserve is part of a statewide network of Friends groups and his hope is that the Friends groups can work together to benefit the programs.

Mike S went on to describe the different components of the preserve and how they relate to each other and the community.

The presentation covered the Management Plan, Mission Statement, the property and the need for conservation, the need to study habitats while maintaining stability, the assessment process, and partnerships.

The presentation was well worth the time and because it relies heavily on power point I can not do it justice here.

Other Business

There was no other business

Michael T motioned to adjourn

Chris seconded

Meeting Adjourned at 6:55 by Peter Difatta

The next monthly board meeting will be Tuesday, March 11, 2008